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**FORWARD PRESENCE: U.S. NAVAL FORCES
MEET THE CHALLENGE**

BY

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FORWARD PRESENCE: U.S. NAVAL FORCES MEET THE CHALLENGE

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ABSTRACT

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As the world becomes increasingly international, the United States remains engaged in regions where U.S. interests are involved. U.S. military forces are one tool used to shape the security environment and, when necessary, to respond to crises when shaping fails. This paper examines the requirement for military forces present forward and the role that U.S. Naval Forces play in accomplishing the mission of forward presence. It reviews the available National guidance, identifies present and future Naval forward-presence platforms and capabilities, and explores alternatives to the use of Naval assets in conducting forward presence roles.

This study assumes that all branches of the U.S. Armed Forces will participate in conducting forward presence operations. However, only Naval assets can passively operate in a non-permissive environment. The Air Force would have to fly long distances or establish a base near the region of instability, which would require host nation permission. Similarly, the Army would require permission before inserting a land force. Afloat Naval assets are sovereign territories of the United States. They can remain in international waters and still fulfill their presence role. No permission from or concessions to a host nation are required. This unique capability ensures that the Navy/Marine Corps team will always be involved in conducting forward presence.

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FORWARD PRESENCE: U.S. NAVAL FORCES MEET THE CHALLENGE

Overseas presence is the visible posture of US forces and infrastructure strategically positioned forward, in and near key regions.

—Gen. John Shalikashvili

This quote captures the essence of overseas or forward presence from a military perspective and is used as the basic definition in this paper. The definition is expanded later in the paper when Naval forward presence is specifically addressed. Forward presence is a role carried out by all branches of the U.S. Armed Forces but is a staple for U.S. Naval forces. In the 1800's the Navy was forward deployed protecting U.S. citizens and commerce from piracy on the high seas. During the 1900's, including the Cold War, deterrence, containment and reassurance of our allies were roles for forward deployed Naval forces.

Naval forces of the 21st century will continue to be forward deployed for many reasons. These forces will be in areas of the world advancing democracy and ensuring U.S. security and prosperity. U.S. civilian and military leadership has assigned the missions of overseas presence and forward presence to the Armed Forces.

This study examines the direction provided to the Department of the Navy (DON) and other Armed Services concerning forward presence. It further describes what the Naval forces offer in the role of forward presence and explores other options. This study concludes with a look at the role of U.S. forward presence in the early 21st century and the possible contribution of Naval forces. This study does not hypothesize that one service should perform the role of military forward presence alone. Rather, this study provides the foundation to support the argument that Naval forces play a significant role in fulfilling the mission of forward presence, now and in the future, as assigned by the President and the Department of Defense.

NATIONAL GUIDANCE

The U.S. national security strategy under President William J. Clinton was one of engagement. While the specific details of President George W. Bush's national security may differ from those of President Clinton, this study assumes that the United States will continue to undertake international leadership roles where U.S. interests are involved. The U.S. military is one of several options President Bush will have available to shape the international environment and promote U.S. interests abroad. What follows is a review of several strategic documents that help to fully understand the important role overseas presence plays in promoting national security. These documents are the National Security Strategy (NSS), Annual Defense Report

(ADR), Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR), and National Military Strategy (NMS) - all key documents that establish the security strategy for the United States.

NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY

“Our strategy is founded on continued U.S. engagement and leadership abroad. The United States must lead abroad if we are to be secure at home.”¹ This statement by President Clinton in the 1999 NSS establishes the strategy of engagement and the importance of the United States being involved abroad. The 2000 NSS builds on President Clinton’s engagement strategy found in the 1999 NSS and lists three elements of engagement, which are: shaping the international security environment, responding to threats and crises, and preparing for an uncertain future.²

The 2000 NSS envisions the military playing a crucial role in shaping the international security environment through overseas presence and peacetime engagement activities.³ The role of the U.S. Military in shaping includes activities such as “defense cooperation, security assistance, regional centers for security studies, training, and exercises with allies and friends...to deter aggression and coercion, build coalitions, promote regional stability, support the development of indigenous counterdrug law enforcement capabilities, and serve as role models for militaries in emerging democracies.”⁴ Military forward presence is not just deterrence, but deterrence is a major role. An U.S. military presence in a region demonstrates the determination of the United States to defend U.S., allied, and friendly interests. This same presence helps to prevent the development of power vacuums and instability. If U.S. credible combat forces are not forward deployed in critical regions around the world, other countries, with opposing interests, will take advantage of the leadership vacuum in the area and seek to influence the region themselves.⁵

The United States must be able to respond to threats and crises when shaping fails. With U.S. interests in mind, the United States can respond using a variety of tools that include diplomacy, economic measures, and military operations. For a response to be effective, it must be timely. When military operations are used, either alone or in conjunction with another response tool, forward-deployed forces contribute to a quick response. The United States will act unilaterally but prefers to respond in concert with allies.⁶ A joint military response is more easily accomplished due to the previously described shaping efforts of forward-deployed U.S. forces such as coalition building, training with allies and conducting exercises with allies.

Preparing for an uncertain future and addressing today’s security problems must be accomplished at the same time.⁷ Forward-deployed forces shaping and responding today

contribute in preparing for an uncertain future. By engaging in critical regions, the U.S. military is gathering information and finding out sooner what is happening around the world. This enables military leaders to identify changes that must be made in order to shape and respond in the future. Military changes could include an adjustment in force structure; decisions concerning deployments (where, when, what, how many forces); and recruiting, training and retention of personnel. Also, forward-deployed military forces reduce the amount of uncertainty in the future through their current shaping and responding roles.

QUADRENNIAL DEFENSE REVIEW AND ANNUAL DEFENSE REPORT

The 1997 QDR is an important document because it lays the foundation for several follow on documents. William S. Cohen, the Secretary of Defense, stated in 1997 that "...full-spectrum forces require a balanced mix of overseas presence and power projection capabilities. Maintaining a substantial overseas presence posture is vital to both the shaping and responding elements of the strategy."⁸ It was in the 1997 QDR that the defense strategy was first defined by three elements: shaping the international environment, responding to the full spectrum of crises, and preparing now for an uncertain future.⁹ The 1999 NSS used the three elements of shape, respond and prepare to define its strategy for enhancing U.S. Security. The 2000 ADR presents the National Defense Strategy that supports the engagement strategy laid out in the 1999 NSS and carried forward in the 2000 NSS. The defense strategy of shape, respond, and prepare was again used in the 2000 ADR.¹⁰ The 2000 ADR emphasizes overseas presence by describing several ways to accomplish the policy, which includes forces permanently stationed abroad, forces rotationally deployed overseas, and forces deployed temporarily.¹¹ As stated in the 2001 ADR, shaping by U.S. military forces overseas "provides reassurance that the United States is committed to peace and security in that region, and to reducing the likelihood of conflict by demonstrating resolve and lowering tensions."¹² As an example, United States Pacific Command (USPACOM) "forces are employed throughout the diverse Asia-Pacific region to shape the region's security environment."¹³ Again, when shaping fails, the United States must be able to respond quickly. "The United States' ability to respond rapidly and substantially as a crisis develops can have a significant deterrent effect.... In cases where deterrence fails and conflict erupts, the timely involvement of military forces can help contain, resolve, or mitigate the consequences."¹⁴ Forward-deployed forces may not provide a complete response, but they will always be part of the answer.

NATIONAL MILITARY STRATEGY

The current NMS is from 1997 and it developed four strategic concepts that govern the United States' use of military force and forces as the strategy of Shape, Respond, and Prepare Now is executed. One of the four concepts is overseas presence.¹⁵ The NMS states that "forces present overseas promote stability, help prevent conflict, and ensure the protection of US interests. Our overseas presence demonstrates our determination to defend US, allied, and friendly interests while ensuring our ability to rapidly concentrate combat power in event of crisis."¹⁶ In essence, this is the contribution overseas presence brings to shaping and responding. Working from the direction set forth in NMS, the DON performs the ongoing process of developing its own policies, procedures and capabilities to accomplish the mission of forward presence.

U.S. NAVAL FORCES AND FORWARD PRESENCE

In April 2000 Admiral Jay L. Johnson, Chief of Naval Operations (CNO), applied General Shalikashvili's forward presence definition (described above) to the Navy. Admiral Johnson defined forward presence as "being physically present with combat credible forces to Deter Aggression, Enhance Regional Stability, Protect and Promote U.S. interests, Improve Interoperability, and provide Timely Initial Crisis Response where our national interests dictate."¹⁷ The Navy will operate in the 21st century from this definition. The Navy's 21st century strategy and position towards forward presence began in 1992.

In 1992 the Secretary of the Navy, CNO, and Commandant of the Marine Corps issued a Navy and Marine Corps White Paper titled ...*From the Sea*. This document, a new strategy statement, provided the future direction for maritime forces. During the Cold War the former Soviet Union provided a global maritime threat to the U.S. Navy. Naval forces prepared to meet this threat on the sea in deep blue water. Since the end of the Cold War there has been no global maritime threat to the U.S. Navy. The focus of ...*From the Sea* emphasized a shift from a blue water navy to one of operating in the "littoral" or coastlines of the earth and a key element of the strategy was forward presence. "The Navy and Marine Corps operate forward to project a positive American image, build foundations for viable coalitions, enhance diplomatic contacts, reassure friends and demonstrate U.S. power and resolve. Naval Forces will prepare to fight promptly and effectively, but they will serve in an equally valuable way by engaging day-to-day as peacekeepers in the defense of American interests."¹⁸ As time has passed, ...*From the Sea* has been updated but it remains the foundation of U.S. Naval strategy. In 1993, the DON issued several policy papers that provided updates to the elements included in ...*From the Sea*.

One update, *Naval Forward Presence: Essential for a Changing World*, was devoted entirely to Naval forward presence.¹⁹ This paper identified some of the forms maritime presence takes and their reasons. “Navy port visits promote American ideals, encourage democratic trends, and signal commitment to friends. As has been amply demonstrated...naval forces can provide disaster relief and humanitarian assistance. They can also be used to underwrite U.S. diplomatic initiatives -- to influence friends as well as send unambiguous signals, or if appropriate ... ambiguous signals that can be extremely effective during crisis negotiation ... to potential adversaries.”²⁰

In 1994, the principles in ...*From the Sea* were refined when the document *Forward...From the Sea* was published. Once again forward presence was emphasized. “...the most important role of naval forces in situations short of war is to be engaged in forward areas, with the objectives of preventing conflicts and controlling crises.”²¹ The primary purpose of forward-deployed Naval forces, as defined in 1997 by another update to ...*From the Sea*, “is to project American power from the sea to influence events ashore in the littoral regions or the world across the operational spectrum of peace, crisis, and war. That is what we do.”²²

According to *Forward...From the Sea* “Naval forces are particularly well-suited to the entire range of military operations in support of our national strategies.”²³ Overseas presence is a tool used to deter aggression, respond rapidly to crises, build coalitions, and promote regional security.²⁴ Naval forces deter aggression with combat-credible forward presence and these same forces provide the means for responding quickly to crises if deterrence fails. Naval forces operating in theater with coalition forces provide security within the region. Overseas presence can also be used towards achieving global power projection, “which is key to the flexibility demanded of our forces and provides options for responding to potential crises and conflicts....”²⁵ “The foundation of maritime power projection is robust and credible naval expeditionary forces present forward where our vital interests – economic, political, and military are most concentrated. They provide a security framework that complements other instruments of national power to build stability and favorably shape regions of interest.”²⁶ Aircraft Carrier Battle Groups (CVBG) and Amphibious Ready Groups (ARG) are the two primary overseas presence building blocks of the Naval Forces.²⁷

The Navy routinely builds coalitions with foreign governments by participating in joint naval exercises around the world. During 1999 Naval forces “undertook more than 140 cooperative naval exercises with 57 countries.”²⁸ Naval forces conduct routine port visits, provide humanitarian assistance, and disaster-relief efforts all of which “underscore U.S.

diplomatic initiatives overseas.²⁹ Forward-deployed Naval forces provide “the critical operational linkages between peacetime operations and the initial requirements of a developing crisis or major regional contingency.”³⁰ As crises break out in isolated areas of the world, Naval forces are often the first to arrive due to their ability to respond quickly from forward-deployed positions. While Air Force assets can be quick to respond they will require additional time to establish a forward airhead in order to remain present in the area. The Army can be flown into, or dropped into, an area quickly but they must meet up with their heavy equipment to reach full operational status. Airlifting heavy Army equipment into the region requires time. Fill the time delay for the arrival of Air Force and Army with early arriving Naval forces. When Naval forces are the first to arrive, they “can serve as the transition force as land-based forces are brought forward into theater.”³¹ U.S. warships are considered sovereign territory of the United States. As such, warships are highly mobile “sea bases” in forward areas and “are therefore free of the political encumbrances that may inhibit and otherwise limit the scope of land-based operations in forward theaters.”³² Finally, Commanders in charge of Naval forward-deployed forces have the flexibility of a scalable force that can be visible or hidden over the horizon.

The current Navy strategic document is the *Navy Strategic Planning Guidance* (NSPG), which was released in April 2000. This document builds on early strategic documents and identifies the ends, ways, and means the Navy will use to achieve Maritime Power Projection. “Combat-credible forward presence through the seas and *knowledge superiority* via cyberspace will, together, provide the means for effective maritime power projection.... Projecting U.S. power and influence from the sea is the heart of the Navy and Marine Corps’ contribution to national security.”³³ According to the 2001 ADR the Navy’s *Maritime Concept* “provides the organizing principles for the new capabilities and concepts needed to assure access forward with combat-credible forward presence and knowledge superiority.”³⁴ The Maritime Concept approach is to use the international medium of the seas to achieve forward presence and the international medium of cyberspace to achieve knowledge superiority. The “ends” presented in the Maritime Concept are Regional Stability, Deterrence, Timely Crisis Response, and War Fighting and Winning. Forward Presence and Knowledge Superiority together provide the “means” that result in maritime power projection. The “ways” to achieve the means are Battlespace Control, Battlespace Attack, and Battlespace Sustainment. Forward presence, as one of the two “means,” plays a key role in the Maritime Concept.

ALTERNATIVES TO NAVAL FORWARD PRESENCE

Naval Forces are just one option the United States has at its disposal to accomplish forward presence. Other military options include the Army and Air Force. If General Shalikashvili's definition is relaxed to include other U.S. endeavors in addition to those of military forces, then diplomatic efforts, economic measures, and humanitarian activities become viable options. These options each have a place in the forward presence mission.

The U.S. Army contributes to forward presence in specific circumstances. The Army is the only service capable of providing a large land force. This unique Army capability fills the presence prescription for the Korean peninsula. North Korea has a large military force north of the 38th parallel. The U.S. Army combined with South Korean forces are present to balance the military power on the peninsula. By being present forward, the combined U.S./South Korean forces are able to deter North Korea and thus shape the environment to allow diplomatic and economic efforts to occur. The Balkans offer the U.S. Army the ability to provide a double dose of forward presence. The U.S. Army provides a forward presence to the countries in the region as well as those countries contributing forces to the peacekeeping effort.

The U.S. Air Force also maintains a presence on the Korean peninsula and contributes to deterrence there. When the Air Force deploys forward they are dependent on forward basing and are therefore very visible. Their host nation and the host nation's neighbors are able to witness their flight missions. Presence doesn't always have to be forward and this is true for the Air Force. The Air Force capability to deploy long-range aircraft from the continental United States and arrive at its destination within hours is unique among the services.

Diplomatic efforts take various forms and can provide a forward presence. U.S. government officials visiting foreign countries will shape the international environment by making others aware of U.S. intentions first hand. "The daily business of diplomacy conducted through our missions and representatives around the world is an irreplaceable shaping activity."³⁵ This form of shaping can only be accomplished by being there, by having a forward presence.

"Our economic and security interests are inextricably linked. Prosperity at home depends on stability in key regions with which we trade, or from which we import critical commodities.... As national economies become more integrated internationally, U.S. prosperity depends more than ever on economic developments abroad. Cooperation with other states and international organizations is vital to protecting the health of the global economic system and responding to financial crisis."³⁶ Economic measures achieve a forward presence when U.S. international

involvement results in exporting U.S. products overseas and U.S. businesses operating in foreign countries.

U.S. military forces are often involved in humanitarian activities around the world but non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are usually the first to arrive and the last to leave. “Private firms and non-governmental organizations are natural allies in activities and efforts intended to address humanitarian crises and bolster democracy and market economies.”³⁷ These natural allies include NGOs such as the International Red Cross and CARE as well as local human rights groups and environmental advocates.

NAVAL FORWARD PRESENCE IN THE 21ST CENTURY

JOINT AND NAVAL GUIDANCE

Forward Presence will continue to be a major role of military forces in the 21st century. The key to the 21st Century is the third element of the Defense Strategy – prepare now for an uncertain future. This is the focus of *Joint Vision 2020* (JV2020). “The strategic concepts of decisive force, power projection, overseas presence, and strategic agility will continue to govern our efforts to fulfill those responsibilities and meet the challenges of the future.”³⁸ JV2020 places an emphasis on full spectrum dominance, “the ability of US forces, operating unilaterally or in combination with multinational and interagency partners, to defeat any adversary and control any situation across the full range of military operations. The full range of operations includes maintaining a posture of strategic deterrence. It includes theater engagement and presence activities.”³⁹

The DON is planning for the future and the missions it will accomplish including, as identified in JV2020, forward presence. Now and in the future “the maritime concept will support the objectives of the National Security Strategy and National Military Strategy by two “means”: Forward Presence and Knowledge Superiority. These “means,” therefore, comprise the highest naval strategic priorities.”⁴⁰ “The “means,” “ways” and “ends” of our maritime concept for the next century are all built upon the historic role of the Navy in the service of our maritime nation, **forward naval presence.**”⁴¹ These statements indicate the important position of forward presence for Naval forces. NSPG identifies the CVBG, ARG, and Maritime Patrol and Reconnaissance (MPR) as the key elements of forward Naval presence now and in the future, with the CVBG being the core of the forward-deployed surface force.⁴² According to the 2000 NSPG the “CVBG contains the combined deterrence capabilities of surface, subsurface and air power to present the most combat credible presence forward.”⁴³ Included among the

capabilities of the CVBG is theater ballistic missile defense (TBMD), air warfare, long-range strike, undersea warfare, surface warfare, naval surface fire support, and mine counter measures. The ARG consists of various amphibious ships and landing craft. The ARG will frequently have an embarked Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU), Special Operations Capable (SOC). The ARG/MEU SOC provides forward presence, power projection and is capable of performing missions ranging from humanitarian assistance and disaster relief to crisis response and full-scale combat operations. In fact, the ARG/MEU SOC is often one of the initial forces to react to a crisis. MPR forces are land based consisting of squadrons of aircraft based on the P-3 Orion. Several of the mission capabilities of the MPR forces are similar to the Air Force such as over the horizon targeting/surface warfare, land attack, strike support (targeting/battle damage assessment). The missions of undersea warfare and mine warfare are unique to the MPR forces. These forces are forward deployed and are highly visible because they depend on forward basing. Like the Air Force, forward basing of P-3 aircraft requires a ground contingent and host nation permission and support. They operate over land, in the littorals and far out to sea – all places where host and neighboring nations can observe.⁴⁴

There are issues surrounding NSPG's long-range plan for forward presence. Specifically, NSPG identifies that manpower and the number of platforms are important. **"Numbers Count.** The conspicuous forward presence of combat-credible Naval forces is a visible and compelling deterrent, and a symbol of American power and influence. As we build the future force, we must remember that numbers for presence are not a lesser-included case of regional contingencies; sufficient platforms and personnel are required to maintain a presence wherever we require access and influence.... Insufficient numbers entail strategic risk as well as excessive personnel and operational tempos. Clearly, numbers of platforms and naval forces matter."⁴⁵ Ultimately the ability of Naval forces to be forward deployed will come down to cost and how much risk the President, Secretary of Defense and Congress are willing to accept. President Bush has promised that he will push Congress for additional funding for the military in order to purchase new platforms and weapon systems. However, the President will not request additional funds until the Department of Defense conducts a review of the military and makes recommendations for force structure and weapons systems necessary to enhance national security. While an increase in funding for equipment is delayed, there are additional funds coming to provide an increase in military pay. "People will always be our top priority."⁴⁶ The best strategies or policies will fail if they cannot be carried out by quality people. Even in the 21st Century, people will be required to operate and maintain the high-tech equipment entering the Navy. Increasing military pay is the first step towards taking care of the Navy-Marine Corps

team of sailors, marines, civilians and their families. Addressing the number of platforms, the 1997 QDR "concluded that the Navy must sustain a force of some 346 ships to satisfy the operational requirements of the NMS, given resource limitations, current projections show that the Navy can expect to sustain no more than about 300 ships in the coming decade."⁴⁷ Funding restrictions have increased since the 1997 QDR. To meet the 1997 QDR force level, annual funding of \$12.4 billion would be needed to sustain a shipbuilding rate of 10.3 ships per year. To meet a force level of approximately 300 ships, annual funding would need to be \$10.5 billion to reach a shipbuilding rate of 8.7 ships per year. However, the fiscal year (FY) 2002 shipbuilding funding level has been set at \$7.7 billion, resulting in a shipbuilding rate of only 6.3 ships per year.⁴⁸ The discrepancy between number of ships required and the funding level must be addressed as soon as the Department of Defense completes its review of the military.

Operation tempo (OPTEMPO), personnel tempo (PERSTEMPO), and readiness are other issues impacted by funding. The Navy currently meets commitments by utilizing rotational forces rather than calling on additional forces. This process results in high readiness status of forward deployed units but very a very low readiness level of non-deployed units. Like all of the services, the Navy has demanded more from its people and equipment. Arguments have been made that OPTEMPO has increased. In an effort to quantify OPTEMPO, the Navy recently began tracking individual OPTEMPO.

POTENTIAL PLATFORMS AND PROGRAMS

Leaving funding concerns behind, what forward presence missions will be required in the 21st Century and how will these missions be accomplished? With a focus of operating in the littoral regions of the world, the DON is planning a variety of new and updated platforms that will continue to conduct forward presence operations as one of their primary missions.

Instability in the Persian Gulf requires an U.S. presence there. In the future, regional instabilities in remote areas of the world have the potential to occur and the United States will choose to be involved to those areas that impact U.S. national interests. The free flow of oil, an U.S. national interest, is why the United States maintains a naval presence in the Persian Gulf. Freedom-of-navigation (FON) is an U.S. national interest and defending the right of FON continues to be a forward presence mission for the U.S. Navy. Instability in around the Panama Canal, the Suez Canal or the Strait of Malacca would require an U.S. presence to defend FON through these passages. Instabilities that escalate into armed conflict are detrimental to U.S. interest. The United States keeps regional instabilities from escalating into in armed conflict through forward presence – through power projection, deterrence and show of force. The

CVBG accomplishes all of these forward presence roles with the flexibility not available from the other services. "The core of the forward-deployed surface naval force will be the Carrier Battle Group.... The CVBG normally operates as a contained, self-sustaining force, with little dependence on shore based support able to maintain a stable base of operations for long periods of time in international waters and airspace, unfettered by sovereignty concerns."⁴⁹ The Air Force would have to fly long distances or establish a base near the region of instability, which would require host nation permission. Similarly, the Army would require permission before inserting a land force. Tailored and shaped for the specific incident, the elements of the CVBG are sovereign territory of the United States. By placing itself just off the coast of a country, the CVBG can remain in international territories and still fulfill its presence role. No permission from or concessions to a host nation are required. The United States prefers to shape an environment in order to avoid a crisis. When shaping fails and a crisis occurs, the United States must be prepared to respond. The CVBG is capable of shaping and responding. A CVBG can shape the environment through deterrence. The presence of a CVBG can deter a would-be aggressor from creating a crisis. Should deterrence fail, a CVBG is prepared to respond with military force if necessary. The advantage the CVBG and other Naval assets have over the other services is they are able to conduct forward presence in a non-permissive environment. Planning for their involvement in forward presence, the Navy is looking to update or purchase new carriers, destroyers, and aviation assets.

At the core of the CVBG is the carrier. The first *Nimitz* (CVN-68) class carrier reached the fleet in 1975. This class of carrier has a service life of 50 years. Two more *Nimitz* class carriers are planned. CVN-76 was christened in March 2000 and will be delivered to the fleet in FY 2002. CVN-77, due in FY 2008, will be a transition carrier. Incorporated into the CVN-77 will be new integrated combat systems that allow the Navy to use network-centric warfare to a greater extent. This ship will lead to the evolutionary-designed next-generation nuclear carrier, CVNX. CVNX-1 is due to reach the fleet in 2013 and will build upon the concepts developed for the CVN-77. The CVNX ships will incorporate warfighting improvements and acquisition, operations, and support cost-saving measures at an affordable pace. The CVN-68 class and CVNX class carriers will take the Navy well past 2025.⁵⁰ It is highly unlikely that the Air Force will make carriers obsolete for many reasons. The estimated service-life for *Nimitz* class carriers is 50 years, which means that CVN-76 will be in the fleet and playing a role in forward presence at least until 2052. The Air Force cannot maintain a constant forward presence in an area without forward basing. By rotating carriers and with replenishment from combat logistics ships, the Navy is able to keep a carrier on station for an indefinite period.

Carrier based aircraft extend the presence of the CVBG to a wider area. This allows presence over larger landmasses while still retaining the political flexibility of operating from international waters. Naval aviation is planning for the future through upgrades and new procurements. In the strike-fighter arena, the F/A-18E/F Super Hornet will “provide critical growth capacity, weapon bring-back improvements, survivability enhancements, and range/payload improvements....”⁵¹ The F/A-18E (single seat) will replace older F/A-18s while the F/A-18F (two-seats) will replace F-14A/B/Ds. The Joint Strike Fighter (JSF) is an affordable, highly common family of next-generation multi-role strike fighter aircraft and is being pursued by the Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, and allies. With three U.S. services collaborating as well as foreign country involvement, the JSF program will be able to reduce the cost of developing, producing and owning these aircraft.⁵² The JSF concept is building three common variants on the same production line using flexible manufacturing technology. The Navy will use the carrier version of the conventional takeoff and landing JSF, which will provide a stealthy strike fighter to complement the F/A-18E/F. The marines will use the short takeoff vertical landing JSF as its only strike fighter, replacing the AV-8B and F/A-18A/C/D. The P-3 Orion aircraft, which is part of the MPR force, is being modernized with a focus “on providing a more tailored force optimized for regional and littoral crisis and conflict.”⁵³ The P-3 is a shore-based aircraft providing the visible forward presence described earlier.

The *Arleigh Burke* class guided missile destroyers will be equipped with the updated Aegis radar system. The updated Aegis radar system allows the ship to detect and track theater ballistic missiles. Theater Ballistic Missile Defense (TBMD) operating from sea based platforms takes advantage of having Navy ships forward-deployed but still allows the ships to act independently from host nation support.⁵⁴ TBMD will provide a CVBG the force protection it needs to maintain its presence and can be extended to provide missile defense over land.

A key element to a CVBG is the ability to operate in the littoral and the Land-Attack Destroyer (DD-21) fills that role. As the first surface combatant totally designed on post-Cold War strategic concepts, the DD-21 is the Navy’s next-generation surface vessel. “Its principal missions are to provide independent forward presence and deterrence, and to operate as an integral part of a Naval, Joint, or Combined (i.e., multinational) Task Force.”⁵⁵ “DD-21 will provide sustained, offensive, distributed, and precise firepower at long ranges to support forces ashore and to conduct independent attacks on land targets in support of national objectives.”⁵⁶ “DD-21 will take advantage of advanced stealth features to make these warships less detectable to potential adversaries and more survivable to enemy attack.”⁵⁷

The Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTAF) embarked on an ARG provides forward presence in the form of deterrence and power projection. The MAGTAF is a constant reminder to a would-be aggressor that ground forces can be quickly inserted into an area if necessary. Because the MAGTAF is afloat on units in the ARG, they can be moved from one area to another, which provides a flexible response not available from the Army. The Marine Corps is looking forward to the updates that are planned for the ARG. The current fleet of amphibious ships used in the ARG are aging and do not meet all the requirements in "Operational Maneuver From the Sea (OMFTS) and Ship-to-Objective Maneuver (STOM) concepts and operations."⁵⁸ The *San Antonio* (LPD-17) Class Amphibious Transport Dock Ship is the answer to these shortfalls. LPD-17 will be more maneuverable than older amphibious ships, have improved medical and aviation maintenance facilities, and have more room for troops, vehicles, and cargo. Enhancing the Marine Corps' capability to conduct OMFTS and STOM is the V-22 Osprey Joint Advanced Vertical Aircraft. The tilt-rotor design of this aircraft allows it to fly like an airplane while taking off and landing like a helicopter from the LPD-17. The V-22 will allow the Marine Corps to carry more personnel and equipment farther inland, thus extending the area where their presence can be felt.⁵⁹

CONCLUSION

Several key events will occur in the near future that will impact funding and military missions such as forward presence. The Department of Defense must complete the review of the military, pass the information on to President Bush, and then decide on a direction for the military. When published, the 2001 NSS will be the first one under the Bush Administration. This document will provide the guidance for a new NMS, a document that has not been updated since 1997. Utilizing the 2001 NSS and the new NMS, the individual services can then plan for the first half of the 21st Century. Once these events take place, a subsequent examination of Naval forward presence could be completed making use of the most recent information.

The United States will continue to engage other nations worldwide. As seen in several strategic documents, the strategy of engagement requires a military forward presence, a mission achieved through a variety of methods. The military will play a large role in forward presence because only the military is capable of responding to an armed conflict when presence and deterrence fails. As previously described, there are roles for the Army, Navy, and Air Force in accomplishing the forward presence mission. However, Naval forces have been shaping the security environment through forward presence since their inception. The Navy/Marine Corps team are the only ones capable of providing forward presence at sea, in the

air, and on land – and the only ones who can do so in a non-permissive environment. When shaping fails and crises occur, Naval forces are optimally positioned to respond quickly with superior force.

There are challenges in the future for Naval forces as they continue to provide a forward presence. Include among the challenges are platform decisions, funding, operating in the littoral, and joint interoperability. While the White House decides on where presence is required, the DON must decide on what platforms will be the best to accomplish the forward presence mission in conjunction with other missions. This study has identified several platforms the DON has planned that will enhance the Navy and Marine Corps ability to accomplish the forward presence mission. These platforms include CVNX, JSF, DD-21, LDP-17, and the V-22. Joint interoperability is inherent in the design of these future platforms. The Navy-Marine Corps team realizes that they must be prepared to operate independently and in conjunction with other U.S. services and allies. However, funding these platforms is an issue. Due to lack of funding, one or more of these platforms could be eliminated as all the services fight for the limited resources being allocated to the Department of Defense. DD-21 is being designed as the primary littoral ship but if the program is eliminated, how should the Navy proceed? The platforms to meet the challenge of providing forward presence in the first half of the 21st Century have been identified. Funding these platforms remains the DON's largest challenge. Looking farther out, should the Navy continue to develop the CVNX? The *Nimitz* class carrier will be in service past 2050 so the CVNX is the carrier for the second half of the 21st Century. How will forward presence be accomplished past 2050 and will the carrier play a role? Addressing funding for platforms and exploring the role of Naval forward presence past 2050 are two areas that remain to be studied.

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ENDNOTES

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⁷ Ibid., 29.

⁸ William S. Cohen, Report of the Quadrennial Defense Review, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Defense, May 1997), 16; hereafter cited as QDR 1997.

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¹⁰ William S. Cohen, Annual Report to the President and the Congress, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Defense, 2000), 4-7; hereafter cited as ADR 2000.

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¹² William S. Cohen, Annual Report to the President and the Congress, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Defense, 2001), 7; hereafter cited as ADR 2001.

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¹⁴ Ibid., 8.

¹⁵ John M. Shalikashvili, National Military Strategy of the United States of America. Shape: Respond, Prepare Now: A Military Strategy for a New Era, (Washington, D.C.: Joint Chiefs of Staff, 1997), 19; hereafter cited as NMS 1997.

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¹⁷ Jay L. Johnson, Navy Strategic Planning Guidance, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Navy, April 2000), 20; hereafter cited as NSPG 2000.

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²⁴ NSS 2000, 16-17.

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²⁶ Jay L. Johnson, Vision...Presence...Power: A Program Guide to the U.S. Navy 2000 Edition, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Navy, 2000), 7; hereafter cited as Vision...Presence...Power.

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²⁸ Vision...Presence...Power, 5.

²⁹ "Forward...From the Sea," 3.

³⁰ Ibid., 2.

³¹ Ibid., 6.

³² Ibid., 5.

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³⁴ ADR 2001, 180.

³⁵ NSS 1999, 5.

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³⁷ Ibid., 27.

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⁴⁰ NSPG 2000, 39.

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⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 48.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 42.

⁴⁷ Vision...Presence...Power, 22.

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⁵⁰ Vision...Presence...Power, 51-52.

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⁵² Ibid., 43.

⁵³ Ibid., 45.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 69.

⁵⁵ Program Executive Office for DD 21, "DD 21 A Quantum Leap *Forward...From the Sea*"; available from <<http://dd21.crane.navy.mil/dd21/program/overview.htm>>; Internet; accessed 24 February 2001; 1.

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